

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 2158

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT LE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON UK

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0633 SECTION 1 OF 2

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS : PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : BAHRAINI PERCEPTIONS OF GULF COOPERATION

SUMMARY: GOB FOREIGN MINISTER CONTENTS GOB STRONGLY ENDORSES  
CONCEPT OF IRAN'S PLAYING MAJOR ROLE TO ASSURE SECURITY OF  
GULF AND APPRECIATES IRANIAN WILLINGNESS TO LET ARAB STATES  
SET THE PACE FOR BOTH INFORMAL AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY  
INSTITUTIONALIZED IRANIAN-ARAB COOPERATION. ON ARAB SIDE OF  
GULF, GOB SEES RECENT IRAQI INDICATIONS OF WILLINGNESS TO PLAY  
BALL WITH OTHERS AS BASIC CAUSE FOR RECENT UPSURGE IN  
COOPERATIVE UNDERTAKINGS AMONG ARAB GULF STATES. GOB LOOKS  
PRIMARILY TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING  
COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES AMONG GULF ARABS, FEELING KUWAITI  
CAPABILITY TO PLAY THIS ROLE IS LIMITED. GENERALLY, GOB  
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LOOKS TO DEVELOPING A PATHCHWORK OF COOPERATIVE WORKING

ARRANGEMENTS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND FEELS THAT DEVELOPMENT OF MORE FORMALIZED INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATIVE FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING COOPERATION IN SECURITY FIELD, IS STILL PREMATURE. GOB WELCOMES SIGNIFICANT U.S. ROLE IN SUPPORT OF GULF COOPERATION PROVIDED IT IS HANDLED IN LOW KEY MANNER. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WAKE KUWAITI CROWN PRINCE'S VISIT HERE AND BAHRAINI VISITS TO IRAN, IRAQ AND SAUDI ARABIA, I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR LONG DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON BAHRAIN'S PRESENT PERCEPTION OF LIKELIHOOD, PACE AND DIRECTION OF CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG GULF STATES. FOREIGN MINISTER WAS QUICK TO EMPHASIZE THAT BAHRAIN FULLY AWARE OF ITS INABILITY TO PLAY ANY SORT OF LEADING ROLE IN THESE UNDERTAKINGS, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT HOPES TO BE MOSTLY ON RECEIVING END OF ANY COOPERATIVE HELP. AT SAME TIME, I GOT IMPRESSION GOB SEES SOME SCOPE FOR BEING AT FOREFRONT IN MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS IN THE GULF AND, HENCE, BEING IN POSITION TO PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN EVOLVING A STRATEGY FOR CLOSER COOPERATION AND IMPLEMENTING IT.

2. IRAN-FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO ACCOMPANIED PRIME MINISTER ON RECENT OFFICIAL VISIT TO IRAN, RETURNED VERY HIGH ON ABILITY AND GOOD INTENTIONS OF SHAH AND HIS PRINCIPAL LIEUTENANTS AND VISIBLY IMPRESSED BY THE DYNAMICS OF IRANIAN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY. HE DESCRIBES IRAN AS ONLY "THIRD WORLD" COUNTRY CAPABLE OF THINKING AND ACTING LIKE AN INDUSTRIALIZED NATION. (COMMENT: IN LIGHT RECENT CONVERSATIONS, I AM NOT YET PERSUADED AMIR OF BAHRAIN HAS BEEN SO FULLY SWEEPED AWAY WITH ENTHUSIASM FOR THE SHAH AND IRANIANS.) FOREIGN MINISTER IMPRESSED WITH SHAH'S ASSURANCES DURING VISIT THAT IRAN HAS NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS IN GULF AND IS MERELY INTERESTED IN SEEING ARAB SIDE EVOLVE IN MANNER CONDUCTIVE TO STABILITY OF ENTIRE AREA. IRANIANS APPARENTLY EMPHASIZED IRAN'S WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH ARAB GULF STATES, INCLUDING BAHRAIN, IN ANY USEFUL WAY WHILE NOT PUSHING THEMSELVES ON ARABS. INsofar AS DEVELOPMENT BAHRAINI-IRANIAN RELATIONS CONCERNED, FOREIGN MINISTER FORESEES LOW KEY INFORMAL INCREASE IN VARIOUS KINDS OF IRANIAN TECHNICAL AND TRAINING HELP, AVOIDING WHERE POSSIBLE CONCLUSION OF FORMAL AGREEMENTS. FOREIGN MINISTER LOOKS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPMENT OF IRANIAN MILITARY POTENTIAL AS A SAFEGUARD FOR GULF SECURITY (SOME OTHER BAHRAINIS, INCLUDING AMIR, ARE A BIT MORE NERVOUS ABOUT IRANIAN MILITARY BUILDUP) YET SUGGESTS THAT ANY MEANINGFUL ARAB-IRANIAN MILITARY COOPERATION IN GULF, WHICH HE EVENTUALLY CONSIDERS INEVITABLE, MUST AWAIT PROGRESS BY GULF ARABS IN GETTING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS IN ORDER.

3. UNITY OF THE SMALL AMIRATES-FOREIGN MINISTER SEES  
PRESENT ADVANTAGE IN CONTINUING TO PAY LIP SERVICE TO THE  
CONCEPT OF EVENTUAL FORMAL UNITY AMONG THE SMALLER ARAB AMIRATES IN  
GULF BUT, IN REALITY, VIEWS THE IDEA AS A NON-STARTER FOR THE  
FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THE NINE STATE FEDERATION IDEA IS DEAD.  
BAHRAIN APPARENTLY HAS NO INTEREST IN A FORMAL LINKUP WITH  
THE UAE AND FEELS THE UAE ITSELF COULD BEST CONCENTRATE ON  
GETTING ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER. (GOB INCIDENTALLY HAS  
CONSISTENTLY APPEARED SYMPATHETIC TO SAYID'S EFFORTS IN THIS  
REGARD AND GENERALLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE UAE EVENTUALLY WILL  
STRENGTHEN ITS INTERNAL BONDS.) THERE ARE, OF COURSE, VIRTUALLY  
NO PROSPECTS FOR AN OUTBREAK OF CLOSE BAHRAINI-QATARI  
COOPERATION AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER DOES NOT APPEAR REALLY  
TROUBLED BY PROSPECT OF QATAR REMAINING "ISOLATED" FROM ITS  
NEIGHBORS. I PRESSED ON FOREIGN MINISTER IDEA THAT KUWAIT,  
BECAUSE OF ITS RELATIVE SIZE AND WEALTH, HAS SPECIAL ROLE TO  
PLAY IN HELPING TO PULL GULF AMIRATES TOGETHER. HE REJECTED

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